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Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

School Finance



School Elections

Please note the following regular school election deadlines:

- April 2nd – Last day to transmit resolutions for the regular school election to the county election administrator
- April 6th – Last day to notify election judges of appointment
- April 8th – Voter registration closes
- April 11th at 5:00 pm – Deadline for write-in candidates
- April 11th after 5:00 pm – Election by Acclamation and Cancellation of Election Notice (if the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of open trustee positions)
- April 17th – Absentee ballots available
- May 7th – ELECTION DAY

For mail ballot elections, ballots are mailed between April 12th and April 22nd (all ballots must be mailed on the same day, with the exception of reactivated electors).

General Fund Levy – Legislative Years:

MCA 20-20-105 allows districts to conduct a special general fund levy election on a day other than the regular school election day in years when the legislature meets in regular or special session and school funding is affected. Districts may hold off requesting a general fund levy until after the election. However, districts should start planning for that election to ensure that deadlines are met. The OPI is available to help districts calculate deadlines for elections held on a day other than the regular school election day.

The Secretary of State's office recently tested and approved the ES&S Unity version 3.4.00 electronic voting system and issued a Voting System Examination Report. The report can be accessed on the Secretary of State's website at: [CLICK HERE](#).

Please contact Nicole Thuotte at (406) 444-4524 or nthuotte@mt.gov for election

questions.

QZAB Applications Available

The application period for Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB) is now open. Under the QZAB program, the federal government provides bondholders with a tax credit in lieu of a cash interest payment. The school district or other issuer is then, in general, only responsible for repaying the amount borrowed. This is a substantial benefit because interest payments can equal up to 50 percent of the economic cost of a bond. A QZAB is a better value for the district because, under these tax-credit bonds, the federal government pays, on average, all of the interest, whereas, under tax-exempt bonds, the school district typically recoups only 20 percent of the interest payments.

QZABs can be used for renovation and repair projects, but not for new construction. Schools may also use QZAB proceeds to invest in equipment and up-to-date technology, develop challenging curriculum, and train quality teachers. Schools can address specific needs associated with aging and overcrowded schools such as infrastructure, technology, health and safety, and environmental and energy efficiency issues.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has \$2,358,000 in QZAB authority to allocate to Montana school districts. Please note that an approved QZAB request does not result in any payment from the OPI to an applicant school district. An approved allocation request allows a school district to designate a future bond issuance as a QZAB, which allows the school district to benefit from the reduced interest costs.

The OPI has selected criteria that we believe are most likely to result in the successful sale of QZABs. Priority for application approval will be applied in the order shown below:

- District has available debt capacity to support requested QZAB allocation request
- District has already received voter approval to issue bonds, and would like to designate those bonds as QZABs.
- District intends to issue bonds without the need for voter approval (must indicate this on application and describe how the debt obligation will be funded).
- Districts with the earliest election dates, as indicated on the application.

The application and full QZAB application letter can be found on the OPI School Finance Webpage at: [CLICK HERE](#). If interested, please complete the application and submit to the OPI. Please read the application carefully to take note of specific

requirements of the program.

If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Nicole Thuotte at (406)-444-4524 or by e-mail at nthuotte@mt.gov

Montana Society of CPAs Hosts GAAFR Conference

The Montana Society of Certified Public Accountants will hold a one-day Governmental Audit, Accounting and Financial Reporting (GAAFR) Conference on Friday, **May 3, 2013** at the Best Western GranTree Inn, 1325 N 7th Ave, Bozeman, MT. The cost is \$150. The conference is designed for auditors of local governments, including school districts, accountants from city, county, town and school district business offices and representatives of local government governing boards.

The committee has also put together a **GASB 45-OPEB After Implementation** panel discussion on **May 2, 2013** at the Hilton Garden Inn, 2023 Commerce Way, Bozeman, MT.

The conference brochure is available at this link: [CLICK HERE](#)

For more details and to register for the conference and/or the panel discussion, go to: [CLICK HERE](#)

MAPT Conference

The Montana Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Conference Registration and Agenda have been posted to the OPI Pupil Transportation website at the following link: [CLICK HERE](#)

The registration form has been made into a form-fillable PDF. To download the form, click the link, go to File, and "Save As".

The conference will be on **June 19th-21st, 2013** at the Red Lion Colonial Inn, 2301 Colonial Drive, Helena, MT.

For more information, contact Donell Rosenthal, (406) 444-3024 or drosenthal@mt.gov

FY2013-14 Indirect Cost Rate Applications Now Available

Districts that plan to charge indirect costs (e.g., general administration, accounting services, and personnel services) to FY2013-14 federal and state grant awards using an indirect cost rate must complete an indirect cost application form. Application for an indirect cost rate does not increase the amount of the grant award.

Indirect Cost Rate Application forms and resources for FY2013-14 are now available on the OPI website.

Indirect Cost Rate Cover Letter (please read): [CLICK HERE](#)

Indirect Cost Rate Instructions: [CLICK HERE](#)

If you intend to reclassify costs to adjust your indirect cost rate, please read the indirect cost rate instructions carefully. For your convenience, costs that may be reclassified are highlighted in blue. We have also created a reclassification calculator to assist in the determination of your adjusted indirect cost rate. The calculator is located at the following link: [CLICK HERE](#)

Schedule A, which shows preliminary rates: [CLICK HERE](#)

The Certification forms are located at: [CLICK HERE](#)

If you have questions or need assistance viewing the files, please contact Debbie Casey at (406) 444-3096 or e-mail dcasey@mt.gov.

Funding provided for Montana Digital Academy operations for FY 2013

House Bill 210, an act appropriating money for the Montana Digital Academy, has been approved by the Montana Legislature and now awaits the governor's signature. Appropriating \$300,000 from the general fund to the Office of Public Instruction, the bill's passage was a collaborative effort. The Office of Public Instruction extends its gratitude to the many K-12 education organizations and individual proponents that came together to ensure this bill's success. The funding, which is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June, 30 2013, is crucial to the ongoing success of the Montana Digital Academy and preserves access to high-quality online courses for thousands of students in Montana.

For more information, contact Dennis Parman, Deputy Superintendent, 406-444-5643 or dparman@mt.gov.

Perkins 'Intent to Apply' and State Voed Application--due April 19

The online link to access and complete the combined Federal and State Funding application is now available and listed below. It is also available on the Secondary CTE web page of the OPI website inside the *Perkins Federal Funding* tab.

Authorized Representatives of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will use the online link to access and complete the Perkins '*Intent to Apply*' electronic form and the State Voed Funding application for the 2013-2014 E-Grants cycle. All public high schools and K-12 districts with qualifying Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are eligible to apply for funding. Elementary districts are not eligible for Perkins or State Voed monies. Districts will NOT receive a 2013-2014 Perkins allocation unless this electronic form is completed and submitted online at the OPI on or before the deadline. These designations are binding and cannot be changed once allocations have been downloaded into the E-Grants system.

The online link is located here: [CLICK HERE](#)

The combined Perkins 'Intent to Apply' AND State Voed Funding application **DEADLINE is April 19, 2013.**

For more information, contact Diana Fiedler, 406.444.9019 or dfiedler@mt.gov.

School Staffing / TEAMS

Authorized Representatives (ARs) have been asked to submit a TEAMS Security Form to designate a person to enter requests for School Employee IDs (SEIDs) and the Terms of Employment (TOE) data in TEAMS when it opens online. In April, OPI will be contacting districts and cooperatives who have not yet submitted the TEAMS security form. These TEAMS features are scheduled to open May 1, 2013. Contact Mary Graff at (406) 444-2448 or mgraff@mt.gov for any questions about the security forms.

This month, OPI will be contacting student information system vendors to begin discussions to develop a teacher-class export for TEAMS. This export replaces a portion of the existing Annual Data Collection (ADC) which provides some of the information necessary to determine compliance with the Montana School Accreditation Standards.

The new educator licensure system, which will be used in conjunction with TEAMS

for accreditation, is scheduled to launch in mid-April.

If you are interested in receiving more specific information about the School Staffing Project / TEAMS as it comes available, please subscribe to the School Staffing/TEAMS newsletter, [CLICK HERE](#).

All the information you will need for the School Staffing Project, including contact information and an overview, can be found on the OPI School Staffing website, [CLICK HERE](#).

For more information, contact Danielle Murphy, (406) 444-1625

Useful Links

State Entitlement Payments to Schools: [CLICK HERE](#)

School Accounting Manual: [CLICK HERE](#)

Forms and Publications & Tuition: [CLICK HERE](#)

Pupil Transportation: [CLICK HERE](#)

Student Count for ANB: [CLICK HERE](#)

Audit Information: [CLICK HERE](#)

OPI Calendar: [CLICK HERE](#)

OPI School Finance Division

Debbie Casey dcasey@mt.gov

Dennis Clague dclague@mt.gov

Steve Hamel shamel@mt.gov

Nica Meral nmerala@mt.gov

Janelle Mickelson jmickelson@mt.gov

Donell Rosenthal drosenthal@mt.gov

Paul Taylor ptaylor2@mt.gov

Nicole Thuotte nthuotte@mt.gov

Kathleen Wanner kwanner@mt.gov

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Denise Juneau, Superintendent
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